

Serial No. 10/670,512

Attorney Docket No. 02-101

REMARKS

A copy of the form PTO 1449 that was filed on 20 April 2004 was returned with the office action. However, one item, the European Search Report, was not initialed. It appears that this was an oversight, since the examiner gave no reason for not considering this item. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request that the examiner send a copy of the form PTO 1449 of 20 April 2004 that indicates that the European Search Report was considered.

Claims 1, 5, 7-15 and 19-31 are pending. Claims 2-4, 6, and 16-18 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 4, 9, 10, 17, 21, 22, and 31 were objected to for depending on a rejected base claim and were said to be allowable if written in independent form. Claim 1 is essentially claim 4 written in independent form; therefore, claim 1 is considered to be in condition for allowance. Claim 9 has been written in independent form; therefore, claim 9 is considered to be in condition for allowance. Claim 12 is essentially claim 17 written in independent form; therefore, claim 12 should be in condition for allowance. Claim 21 has been written in independent form; therefore, claim 21 should be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 24, and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 10-194091. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn because claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 2, 3 and 4 and is now considered to be allowable as mentioned above. Claim 5 and 8 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be in condition for allowance based on their dependency. Claim 6 has been canceled. Claims 24 and 25 now depend on claim 9, which is also considered to be allowable as mentioned above.

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Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 24, and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 5-301564. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn because, as mentioned above, claim 1 is essentially claim 4 written in independent form and is thus considered to be allowable. Claims 2 and 6 have been canceled. Claim 5 and 8 depend on claim 1 and are considered to be in condition for allowance based on their dependency. Claims 24 and 25 now depend on claim 9, which is also considered to be allowable as mentioned above.

Claims 12-16, 18, 20, 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 10-194091 in view of JP 53-2828. Claims 16 and 18 have been canceled and thus will not be discussed. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn because, as mentioned above, claim 12 is now considered to be in condition for allowance. Claims 13-15 and 20 depend on claim 12 and are considered to be allowable based on their dependency. Claims 27 and 28 now depend on claim 21, which is considered to be in condition for allowance, as mentioned above.

Claims 3, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 5-301564 in view of JP 53-2828. Claims 3, 16 and 18 have been canceled and thus will not be discussed. The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn because, as mentioned above, claim 12 is now considered to be in condition for allowance. Claims 13 and 20 depend on claim 12 and are considered to be allowable based on their dependency. Claims 27 and 28 now depend on claim 21, which is considered to be in condition for allowance, as mentioned above.

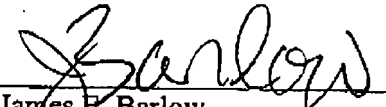
In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

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If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


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